

## YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Drowning is the main cause of death here. Some victims were walking near rivers and fell in; others didn't understand river currents.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your own hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

# Be Safe!

**DROWNING:** Two have drowned so far this year! It is the #1 cause of death in national parks. Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is as dangerous as swimming. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible. Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength.

**PLAGUE:** Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

### POISON OAK:

Common in the foothills! Red leaves with whitish berries in fall, bare in winter; shiny green leaves in groups of three in spring. Ask a ranger to show you. If you touch any part of it, wash skin and clothes right away.



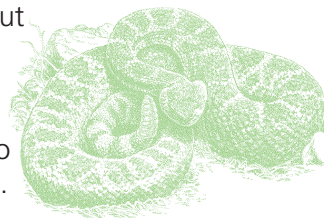
**TICKS:** Common in foothill and Kings Canyon grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a doctor's advice.



**GIARDIA** in lakes and streams can cause intestinal upset. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria and Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

**RATTLESNAKES** are especially common in the foothills. Watch where you put your hands and feet! They are protected; do not kill them. Most bites result from teasing or handling. Very few people die, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.



**LIGHTNING:** If you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from open water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

**WEST NILE VIRUS** is passed by bites from infected mosquitos. Human illness is not common, but take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in closed spaces, e.g. a tent, camper, or RV.

**OZONE POLLUTION:** See air-quality forecasts in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. The peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state/federal standards, and can affect respiratory systems. Ozone forms from gases in car and factory exhaust.

**CELL PHONES** rarely work well in these mountains; don't rely on them. Note where pay telephones are available (see pages 8 & 9).

**COUGARS** roam throughout the parks, but chances of seeing one are very small. They rarely attack people and pets, but be aware. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

**EXPLORE SAFELY:** Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Keep your eyes and ears open for potential hazards above and around you. Slow down and share roads and trails with people and wildlife.

**SAFE DRINKING WATER:** The parks' 13 water systems are tested to ensure that they meet state and federal standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers.

### OPERATION NO-GROW

Prevent illegal marijuana growing! Keep parks safe, natural, and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities: 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

## Rules of the road

**ROAD DELAYS & ROUGH SURFACES** - See page 12.

### GO SLOW FOR WILDLIFE!

Animals along roads often get hit by cars when they stay on roadsides hoping for handouts. Don't feed them!

### DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Frequent braking overheats brakes, causing failure. Instead, *always* downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gear-shift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder, but it will save your brakes.

### AVOID OVERHEATING

Watch the engine temperature gauge or light. If it starts to rise, especially when going uphill, turn off the air conditioner and turn on the fan. If the engine fails, stop in a paved pullout, lift the hood, and wait for it to cool. If the problem is vapor lock, this may fix it.

### FINDING GASOLINE

No gas stations lie within park boundaries. Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or in the National Forest at:

- Hume Lake Christian Camp 559-335-2000: Year-round 24 hours with credit card. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.
- Stony Creek Village 1-559-565-3909: Available 24 hours with credit card. Between Wuksachi & Grant Grove on the Generals Hwy.
- Kings Canyon Lodge 1-559-335-2405: Call to confirm. Gas sales usually 9am-dark. 17 miles (27 km) north from Grant Grove on Hwy 180.

### PREVENT CAR FIRES

Hot brakes & mufflers can start fires. Stop only in paved areas, not on grasses.

### NARROW, WINDING ROADS

IN KINGS CANYON & NATIONAL FOREST/SEQUOIA MONUMENT - In Park: Hwy 180 East to Cedar Grove; Panoramic Point Road; & Redwood Mountain Road (unpaved). In Forest: Big Meadows; Quail Flat/Ten Mile, Converse Basin: all unpaved.

IN SEQUOIA - Crystal Cave Road: Maximum vehicle length 22' (6.7m). Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow Road: During shuttle season 5/22-9/7, single vehicles more than 22 feet long and vehicles towing anything are prohibited. Exception if valid disabled-parking placards are displayed. No drinking water available. Mineral King Road: RVs & trailers not recommended (not permitted in campgrounds). Unpaved sections may be slippery when wet. South Fork Road: Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet. Middle Fork Road: Unpaved. Slippery when wet.

### LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia Park, advised maximum vehicle length is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. Alternative: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, & wider. Towing a car? Stay in the foothills; use the car to explore.

### BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file, with traffic, and wear light colors after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet. See page 12.

### EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

For a tow: 565-3341 then press zero (24 hours). In Sequoia Park only, AAA available 24 hours for lock outs, jump starts, out-of-gas, minor repairs: call 565-4070.

**MOTORCYCLES** See page 12. Avoid oil buildup on pavement.